



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

February 10, 1981

MEMORANDUM

TO: A/CDC - Clayton E. McManaway
FROM: NEA - Peter Constable *PC*
SUBJ: Iran and Freedom of Information
REF: Your Memorandum of Feb. 3, 1981

We agree with your memorandum that with the release of the hostages we should take a fresh look at Iran FOI material. While we can obviously be more liberal than our previously very restrictive guidelines, there remain areas of great sensitivity. We hope that your staff can continue to work closely with NEA/IRN in those sensitive areas.

We suggest that recently retired FSO-1 Charles W. Naas be assigned prime responsibility for reviewing all Iran materials. Mr. Naas was deeply involved in Iranian affairs as Country Director and DCM from summer 1974 to summer 1979.

In our view there are four general guidelines that apply to all Iran materials:

- No release of documents that would reveal intelligence sources, methods, plans or operations;
- No release of material that would place in personal jeopardy any American or any friendly Iranian or other national;
- A willingness to release documents that illustrate the broad outlines of US policy towards Iran at the particular time;
- No release of documents that would seriously complicate efforts to create a new relationship with Iran in the future. We would anticipate that in this crucial area, we would exempt from release material which would compromise the conduct of national defense or foreign policy, as spelled out in FOI regulations.

In addition, we would like to suggest the following considerations for the specific periods under review:

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1951-1955 Documents for FRUS and FOI - A simplified and distorted version of the events of this period has become political dogma in Iran and elsewhere. The release of the full diplomatic record would help to provide a better balance in accounts of our role. For that balance, however, it will be essential to cover our dealings with the British. To exclude the story of US-British cooperation on Iran will not give a true picture of US decisions. We suggest that the Department consult with the FCO to work out practical arrangements for possible release of documents from this record.

1956-February 1979 - Within the general guidelines, we believe we could release much economic, consular and routine political reporting. There would seem to be very few documents of this sort from this period that could not be released in connection with litigation, but that, as on other subjects, would be decided within the guidelines noted above.

February 1979-November 1979 - Many of the documents held in Embassy Tehran files prior to November 4, 1979, can be considered compromised. Through checking this carefully and keeping in mind the general guidelines, many of these documents could be released.

November 1979-January 1981 - Much, but by no means all, of the diplomatic record for this period has been discussed. We recommend release of documents that conform to the general guidelines and that might help to clarify public understanding of the diplomatic activity to free the hostages.